

Seasonable Advice

TO

ELECTORS.

THE QUEEN having by her Royal Prerogative put an end to that Parliament, which would otherwise have been of its self shortly dissolv'd; and it being at present the zealous Endeavours of all Parties to get such Members for the ensuing Parliament, as they think will most promote their own Interest; there being but a poor disregarded Few, who aim only at the Publick Good both of Church and State: And I professing my self to be of that Number, and not concern'd to maintain the Interest of any particular Faction to it, that the private and mean Capacity I was fix'd in would not permit me to do greater Service to my Country, than publish some of those few Speculations, which my Condition hath enabled me to make, without Prejudice, or Desire of any particular Advantage. If they shall be so much observ'd by any, as to guide them into the only way of doing Good to their Country, my Wishes will be obtain'd, and 'tis all the Reward I expect: But if People will be still so far besotted, as to be led by designing Men, who, by crying up a Party, aim only to advance themselves, and will prefer some present Gifts, or future false Promises, with which they have been too often gull'd. Nay, if they so far imitate Beasts, as to be pleas'd with sensual Enjoyments, and rather chuse to venture the loss of their Liberties and Rights, than the Pleasure of a present Debauch, all that I can say will do no other good, than produce to my self the Satisfaction of having done my Duty. And when that Universal Destruction of our Rights and Liberties shall come upon us, which must inevitably follow the increasing and upholding of Parties and Factions, all those who now think these weak Admonitions useless, will have both their Guilt and Destruction increas'd from the Consideration of having once been plainly told their Duty.

That a House divided against it self cannot stand, was the positive assertion of our Saviour; and if we will believe his Words, or follow his Precepts, What Publick Good can we expect from such a House, as is not only barely divided, but rent into several opposite and contending Parties?

If those whose Right it is to vote for Members for the ensuing Parliament, will fully discharge their Duty, it can be by no other way than chusing such who are most inclin'd to Peace, and healing of intestine Contentions. This the QUEEN hath often recommended from the Throne, as the only Means to

pull down the exorbitant Power of France, to make our Fleets and Armies successful abroad, and our selves a flourishing People at home. How to know such Persons seems at first the greatest Difficulty, but 'tis easily solv'd, if we observe the following Method; that is; For such as never yet came within the Walls of the Commons House, to consider, what their Character hath been in the place where they live, or amongst those with whom they have been most conversant: If of a peaceable Temper: If Promoters of the Publick Good, as far as the Sphere they move in will permit them: If Persons well affected to the present Government, and future Establishment: If willing to be guided by their own Consciences, rather than force that of another: If not govern'd by any of those furious Persons, who strive to promote their own Interest, and that of their Party, under the Notion of Zeal for Religion, and an unaccountable Fear and Concern for the Temple of the Lord: If Men of good Morals, and regular Lives and Conversations: If real, and not only pretended Members of the Church of England: These certainly ought to be chosen by all who are Lovers of Religion and the Peace of their Country. And I cannot see how those Persons can persuade their Consciences to believe they have discharg'd their Duty to God, their Neighbours, and Posterity, who will for the sake of private Interest, or present Advantage, promote the Cause of any who are of ill Principles, loose and irregular Lives, and scarce known to be of any Religion, but by crying up that which is most in fashion.

Our Ancestors certainly had greater regard to their own Rights and Privileges, as well as those of their Posterity, than to trust them with such Persons as would sacrifice them to their private Interest or Revenge; they knew that such Men as were bigotted to a Party, could never heartily promote the Publick Good.

As our Constitution here in England is so settled, that 'tis impossible for the Crown to break in upon the People's Privileges, without the Concurrence of part of themselves; or, the People to divest their Sovereign of his just Prerogatives; so it ought to be the special Care of the Nation, not to depute such Persons to represent them, as will lessen either Party's Right, or assume to themselves a Power above what their Primitive Constitution allows them. If therefore any of the Candidates for the succeeding Parliaments have been known in former Parliaments

to have done any thing tending to the Destruction of the People's just Rights, or the Prerogative of the Crown, I think they ought to be rejected with the greatest Contempt. Whether those Persons made any steps towards this, who were of late for clogging Money-Bills, by tacking others to them which they knew would certainly be rejected if by themselves, and so necessitate the passing of a Bill generally detested by the People, or else a Deficiency in the Supplies for carrying on such a just and necessary War, as the Nation is at present engag'd in, for the securing not only our own Liberties, but those of all *Europe*, I think is too much believ'd to be question'd.

And I hope there is no occasion to put the Nation in mind of the Danger that must necessarily proceed from trusting those a second time, who have already shewn their Inclinations to involve the whole Kingdom in Distractions at home, or subject us to a powerful Enemy from abroad.

The Tackers, whoever they were, are generally odious, and if any are so far besotted as to trust them again, I shall wish them no greater Punishment than to feel the first Effects of those Calamities which they must of necessity bring upon us, if their Designs take effect.

But tho' the People seem much dissatisfied with these, yet there are another sort, who by gilding the Pill hope to make it easily swallowed; they pretend to nothing but the Destruction of Hypocrisy, which they and their Emissaries are every where crying out against. The Design, I must confess, is good and commendable, and no Person ought to be against it, if there was not a Snake in the Grass. If the advancement of a turbulent Party was not more design'd than the Glory of God, or the Publick Good. Must I be damn'd for an Hypocrite, who serve God according to the Directions of his Holy Writ, and the Dictates of my own Conscience, and am willing to permit my Neighbour quietly to do the same, and he be cried up for a Saint that seldom or never serves him at all? What, because I am willing to shew my Charity, and agreement in the Fundamentals of Religion, by sometimes joining in Communion with my Neighbours, who differ from me only in a few Circumstantials, by all acknowledg'd to be indifferent, must I be debarr'd of that Right which Nature and our National Constitution hath invested me with, because my Conscience will not permit me constantly to attend that Worship, which even the greatest Stricklers for, will not own to be in every Thing pure and perfect, when my self, and many Thousands more, think it far otherwise, by reason of many unwarrantable and needless Impositions? And must such as have no greater regard for the Church than to secure their own private Profit and Advantage which ariseth from it, nor shall ever be found to speak for it, otherwise than those who made Shrides for *Diana* did for her Temple, be esteem'd the only honest and conscientious Men of the Nation, who are fit to be trusted in Places of the greatest Concern.

And to go farther, if I am (as I solemnly declare my self to be) of the Establish'd Church of *England*, and if I constantly attend the Divine Service thereof, except perhaps very rarely, and upon some particular Occasions of shewing my self to be in Charity with those of our Brethren who own the same Faith, have the same Sacraments, and disagree only in Things indifferent, must I for this be

forc'd from my just Rights, to make way for such who never come near the Church for any other reason than to advance themselves in worldly Pomp and Grandeur?

I appeal to the more sober and considerate Part of Mankind who are the greatest Hypocrites, Those who so far mock God Almighty, by substituting his most Sacred Ordinances to their own worldly Advantage, and have no other regard to them, or such, who, by making Conscience of their Ways and Doings, cannot, without creating a continual Disquiet in their Breasts, either constantly conform to Things they think sinful, or permit Persons of no Religion, Honour, or Honesty, to enjoy such Places as may give them Opportunities to over-turn our Constitution, and reduce the whole Nation into a confused heap of Atheism and Profaneness. How many such there are in this Kingdom is but too well known to need a more particular Demonstration, and the Subject is but too melancholy for me to proceed farther upon at present; I can only leave it to the Consideration of my Country-men, and if they can suppose that those who cannot be known to be of the Church, but by their making so much Noise about it when there is no occasion; who will do any thing for the Church besides observing its Constitutions, and coming constantly to its Divine Service, are Men to be prefer'd before the truly pious Christians, who reverence all its Injunctions, and cannot allow themselves in a wilful and constant Desertion of its Ordinances; or before such others of our Brethren who may be distinguish'd from Hypocrites, by their living up (as far as is consistent with Human Frailty) to the Principles of the Christian Religion, and the strictest Rules of Morality, tho' they cannot comply with all our indifferent Ceremonies. I say, If they suppose the first to be the best Men, the purest Christians, and the others the greatest Hypocrites, then, in God's Name, let them send such Representatives to the ensuing Parliament as pretend to discourage Hypocrisy, and promote the Cause of Religion according to its primitive Institution and Purity. But if they think otherwise, as of necessity they must, I can only recommend to them, such as never distinguish themselves by appearing zealous for any Party; such as will not be made Tools to promote the Disturbances of the Nation, and the Increase of Divisions, but love Purity, Peace, and Christian Charity, and encourage it in whatsoever Persons they find it; such as will consider that the Rights and Privileges of the People are committed to their Care, and make Conscience of preserving them; that will readily and cheerfully assist Her Most Sacred MAJESTY in that just War which She is engaged in against the common Enemy of *Europe*, and will cheerfully contribute their own just Proportions towards it. And lastly, Such as will endeavour to make our Church glorious, by discouraging Hypocrisy, Atheism, and Immorality, and by their own Examples, promoting true Religion, Piety and Virtue.

And if our future Parliaments shall be composed of such Members, we shall have no farther need of Exhortations from the Throne to unite amongst our selves; no more Dissatisfactions amongst the People with the Proceedings of our Representatives; but our solemn Prayers for Union will be turned into Praises, and we shall be the most glorious and flourishing People in the Universe.

